

## CHAPTER 40

### *Al-Mu'min: The Believer*

(REVEALED AT MAKKAH: 9 sections; 85 verses)

The title of this chapter, *Al-Mu'min*, or *The Believer*, is taken from the mention of a *believer* in Mûsâ from among Pharaoh's people (verse 28). This man pleaded for Mûsâ, when Pharaoh wanted to kill him, and drew attention to the fact that, if Mûsâ preached the truth, no opposition to him could prosper.

From this, the 40th, to the 46th chapter, there is a group of seven chapters which all begin with *Hâ Mîm*, and are therefore called *Al Hâ Mîm*, i.e., the chapters beginning with *Hâ Mîm*. They all belong to the period when opposition to the Holy Prophet was very bitter, and active persecution of the Muslims had begun, which culminated in their first flight to Abyssinia; and they belong to the middle Makkan period. All these chapters are further akin inasmuch as they all offer a solace to the persecuted Muslims, warn the persecutors, and foretell the triumph of truth and the failure of opposition. In fact, the failure of the opposing forces is the chief theme of these chapters; this is made plain by a saying of the Holy Prophet, for which see 1a. There is not much of the history of the earlier prophets, with the exception of Mûsâ and Ibrâhîm, and bare references to others or the fate of their people. The Unity and the Power of Allâh is the constant theme, and there are frequent appeals to the disbelievers to take advantage of Divine mercy.

This chapter opens with a statement relating to the Divine plan for the protection of the faithful, who are told that they should not be misled by the power of the opponents, which will soon be broken. The second section continues the subject, only laying greater stress upon the failure of the opponents and the approach of their doom, when they would be perfectly helpless. The next three sections repeat the warning with reference to Mûsâ's history. The sixth states that the prophets of Allâh and the believers in them are always assisted against their opponents, while the seventh calls attention to the great power of Allâh, with Whom nothing is impossible. The last two sections again deal with the end of opposition, repeatedly warning the disbelievers.

## SECTION 1: Protection of the Faithful

In the name of Allâh, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

### 1 *Hâ Mîm*

2 The revelation of the Book is from Allâh, the Mighty, the Knowing,

3 Forgiver of sin and Acceptor of repentance, Severe to punish, *Lord* of bounty.<sup>a</sup>  
There is no Deity but He; to Him is the eventual coming.

4 None dispute concerning the messages of Allâh but those who disbelieve, so let not their control in the land deceive you.

5 Before them the people of Nûh and the parties after them rejected (prophets), and every nation purposed against its messenger to destroy him, and disputed by means of falsehood to render null thereby the truth, so I seized them; how (terrible) was then My retribution!

6 And thus did the word of your *Rabb* prove true against those who disbelieve that they are the companions of the Fire.

7 Those who bear the Throne of Power and those around it celebrate the praise of their *Rabb* and believe in Him and ask protection for those who believe:<sup>a</sup> Our *Rabb*, You embraces all things in mercy and knowledge,<sup>b</sup> so protect those who turn (to You) and follow Your way, and save them from the chastisement of hell.

3a. Of the four attributes, the first two and the last refer to Divine forgiveness, mercy and bounty, while only one refers to punishment of evil, and thus the attribute of mercy preponderates even when punishment is spoken of.

8 Our *Rabb*, make them enter the Gardens of perpetuity, which You have promised them and such of their fathers and their wives and their offspring as are good. Surely You are the Mighty, the Wise:<sup>a</sup>

9 And guard them from evil, and whom You guards from evil this day, You have indeed mercy on him. And that is the mighty achievement.

## SECTION 2: Failure of Opponents

**10** Those who disbelieve are told: Certainly Allâh's hatred (of you), when you were called upon to the faith and you rejected, was much greater than your hatred (now) of yourselves.<sup>a</sup>

**11** They say: Our *Rabb*, twice have You made us die, and twice have You given us life;<sup>a</sup> so we confess our sins. Is there then a way of escape?

**7a.** Those *who bear the 'arsh* or the Throne of Power are not the bearers of any material thing; see 7:54*b* for '*arsh*. Generally the words are explained as meaning *malâ'ikah*, but see 7:54*b*, where I have explained these words as meaning bearers of Divine messages, i.e., the prophets, while those around it are the faithful who, walking in the footsteps of the prophets, carry the Divine message to the world. See also 69:17*a*, where another explanation is given.

**7b.** Here we are told that Divine mercy is as comprehensive as Divine knowledge, and they both extend over all things. No other religion takes such a broad view of the mercy of the Divine Being.

**8a.** The wives and offspring of the faithful, those of them who do good, are here mentioned as entering paradise along with them.

**10a.** The violent hatred referred to is the hatred of the evildoers for themselves, when the evil consequences of their evil deeds become manifest to them. How much greater must have been the hatred of Allah, the Fountain-head of purity, for them when they committed those deeds! How Forbearing and Merciful was He not to visit them with immediate punishment!

**12** That is because when Allah alone was called upon, you disbelieved, and when associates were given to Him, you believed.<sup>a</sup> So judgment belongs to Allâh, the High, the Great.

**13** He it is Who shows you His signs and sends down for you sustenance from *samâ'*,<sup>a</sup> and none minds but he who turns (to Him).

**14** So call upon Allâh, being sincere to Him in obedience, though the disbelievers are averse —

**15** Exalter of degrees, *Lord* of the Throne of Power, He makes the *rûh* to light by His command upon whom He pleases of His servants,<sup>a</sup> that he may warn (men) of the day of Meeting —

**16** The day when they come forth. Nothing concerning them remains hidden from Allâh.<sup>a</sup> To whom belongs the kingdom this day? To Allâh, the One, the Subduer (of all).

**11a.** The first state of death is the state of nothingness from which man is brought into existence, the second life being the life after death.

**12a.** In almost all the great religions at the advent of Islâm, some kind of *shirk* was mixed with the doctrine of pure Unity to which Islâm invited people.

**13a.** The meaning is simply that *Allâh provides the means of sustenance*; or, the sustenance from samâ' means the religious sustenance.

**15a.** The *rûh* (Divine revelation) is here spoken of as being granted only to the elect, and the object is to warn human beings; hence *rûh* in this sense means the Divine revelation, not the soul – but the *nafs* which is given to every human being is confused with the term *rûh*. By the day of Meeting is meant the day of meeting with Allâh.

**16a.** It is implied that the hidden consequences of the deeds will be made manifest on that day, for from Allâh nothing is hidden.

**17** This day every soul is rewarded what it has earned. No injustice this day! Surely Allâh is Swift in Reckoning.

**18** And warn them of the day that draws near,<sup>a</sup> when hearts, grieving inwardly, rise up to the throats.<sup>b</sup> The iniquitous will have no friend, nor any intercessor who should be obeyed.

**19** He knows the dishonesty of eyes and that which the breasts conceal.

**20** And Allâh judges with truth. And those whom they call upon besides Him judge naught! Surely Allâh is the Hearing, the Seeing.

### SECTION 3: A Warning in Mûsâ's History

**21** Have they not travelled in the land and seen what was the end of those who were before them? Mightier than these were they in strength and in fortifications<sup>a</sup> in the land, but Allâh destroyed them for their sins. And they had none to protect them from Allâh.

**22** That was because there came to them their messengers with clear arguments, but they disbelieved, so Allâh destroyed them. Surely He is Strong, Severe in Retribution.

**23** And certainly We sent Mûsâ with Our messages and clear authority,

**18a.** *Âzifah* is from *azafa*, meaning *it drew near* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), and hence *yaum al-âzifah* is *the day that draws near*. It is the nearer punishment of this life that is spoken of here.

**18b.** The verse depicts the state of the hearts of the disbelievers on the day of their vanquishment.

**21a.** *Âthâr* is plural of *athar*, which means *a mark*, and also *a monument* or *memorial of antiquity*. Here it is considered to signify *great buildings* and *fortifications* (*Jâmi' al-Bayân fî Tafsîr al-Qur'ân* (Commentary), by Al-Shaikh Mu'în al-Dîn ibn Safî al-Dîn).

**24** To Pharaoh and Hâmân and Korah,<sup>a</sup> but they said: A lying enchanter!

**25** So when he brought to them the Truth from Us, they said:<sup>a</sup> Slay the sons of those who believe with him and keep their women alive. And the plot of the disbelievers is bound to fail.

**26** And Pharaoh said: Leave me to slay Mûsâ and let him call upon his *Rabb*. Surely I fear that he will change your religion or that he will make mischief to appear in the land.

**27** And Mûsâ said: Truly I seek refuge in my *Rabb* and your *Rabb* from every proud one who believes not in the day of Reckoning.

#### SECTION 4: A Believer of Pharaoh's People

**28** And a believing man of Pharaoh's people, who hid his faith, said: Will you slay a man because he says, My *Rabb* is Allâh, and indeed he has brought you clear arguments from your *Rabb*? And if he be a liar, on him will be his lie, and if he be truthful, there will befall you some of that which he threatens you with. Surely Allâh guides not one who is a prodigal, a liar.<sup>a</sup>

**24a.** The words do not indicate that the message to Pharaoh and Hâmân and Korah was given at one and the same time. All that is meant is that these three were the chief men who did not accept his message and they were destroyed. Of these Korah was an Isrâ'îlite; see 28:76a.

**25a.** It is not meant that all the three persons mentioned in the previous verse met Mûsâ with this reply. A perusal of the verses that follow will show that the speaker here is only Pharaoh, as advised by his chiefs, both he and Hâmân being mentioned by name, the latter in verse 36, while no mention is made of Korah.

**28a.** *Some of that* with which they are threatened will befall them, because the mercy of Allâh wards off some of the deserved punishment. Compare the believer's argument with that advanced by Gamaliel to deal leniently with the apostles of Christ: "Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" (Acts 5:38, 39).

**29** O my people, yours is the kingdom this day, being masters in the land, but who will help us against the punishment of Allâh, if it comes to us? Pharaoh said: I only show you that which I see and I guide you only to the right way.

**30** And he who believed said: O my people, surely I fear for you the like of what befell the parties,<sup>a</sup>

**31** The like of what befell the people of Nûh and 'Âd and Thamûd and those after them. And Allâh wishes no injustice for (His) servants.

**32** And, O my people, I fear for you the day of Calling out<sup>a</sup>—

**33** The day on which you will turn back retreating, having none to save you from Allâh; and whomsoever Allâh leaves in error there is no guide for him.

**34** And Yûsuf indeed came to you before with clear arguments, but you ever remained in doubt as to what he brought you; until, when he died, you said: Allâh will never raise a messenger after him. Thus does Allâh leave him in error who is a prodigal, a doubter -

**30a.** *Yaum al-Aḥzâb* signifies *the events which befell the people of yore* (*Anwâr al-Tanzîl wa Asrâr al-Ta'wîl* (Commentary), by Qâzî Abû Sa'îd 'Abd Allâh ibn 'Umar al-Baidâwî). By the *parties* are meant the parties who organized opposition to the prophets. The word *yaum* is used in Arabic, as its equivalent *day* is used in English, to signify *a contest* or *a fight* (*Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane), and in the phrase *ayyâm al-'Arab*, literally, *the days of the Arabs*, it signifies *accidents* or *struggles*. Hence I render it as *what befell*. There is nothing extraordinary in an Egyptian knowing how certain people on the borders of Arabia perished.

**32a.** *Yaum al-tanâd* means *the day of calling out one to another*, i.e., the day of distress on which one will call out to the other for help, none being able to help himself or another. Every day of distress is *the day of calling out*, and the description need not be limited to the Day of Judgment.

**35** Those who dispute concerning the messages of Allâh without any authority that has come to them. Greatly hated is it by Allâh and by those who believe. Thus does Allâh seal every heart, of a proud, haughty one.

**36** And Pharaoh said: O Hâmân, build for me a tower that I may attain the means of access —

**37** The means of access to the *samâwât*, then reach the Deity of Mûsâ, and I surely think him to be liar.<sup>a</sup> And thus the evil of his deed was made fair seeming to Pharaoh, and he was turned aside from the way. And the plot of Pharaoh ended in naught but ruin.

## SECTION 5: The End of Pharaoh's People

**38** And he who believed said: O my people, follow me I will guide you to the right way.

**39** O my people, this life of the world is but a (passing) enjoyment, and the Hereafter, that is the abode to settle.

**40** Whoever does evil, he is requited only with the like of it; and whoever does good, whether male or female, and he is a believer, these shall enter the Garden, to be given therein sustenance without measure.

**41** And O my people, how is it that I call you to salvation and you call me to the Fire?

**42** You call me to disbelieve in Allâh and to associate with Him that of which I have no knowledge, and I call you to the Mighty, the Forgiving.

**37a.** As Mûsâ spoke of the *Rabb* of the *samâwât* and the earth, Pharaoh mocked at the idea by suggesting that he would build a tower to attack Mûsâ's Allâh.

**43** Without doubt that which you call me to has no title to be called to in this world, or in the Hereafter, and our return is to Allâh, and the prodigals are companions of the Fire.

**44** So you will remember what I say to you, and I entrust my affair to Allâh. Surely Allâh is Seer of the servants.

**45** So Allâh protected him from the evil that they planned; and evil chastisement overtook Pharaoh's people—

**46** The Fire. They are brought before it (every) morning and evening, and on the day when the Hour comes to pass: Make Pharaoh's people enter the severest chastisement.

**47** And when they contend one with another in the Fire, the weak saying to those who were proud: Surely we were your followers; will you then avert from us a portion of the Fire?

**48** Those who were proud say: Now we are all in it: Allâh has indeed judged between the servants.

**49** And those in the Fire will say to the guards of hell: Pray to your *Rabb* to lighten our chastisement for a day.

**50** They will say: Did not your messengers come to you with clear arguments? They will say: Yea. They will say: Then pray. And the prayer of the disbelievers goes only astray.

## SECTION 6: Messengers Receive Divine Help

**51** We certainly help Our messengers, and those who believe, in this world's life and on the day when the witnesses arise<sup>a</sup>—

**52** The day on which their excuse will not benefit the unjust, and for them is a curse and for them is the evil abode.

**53** And We indeed gave Mûsâ the guidance, and We made the Children of Isrâ'îl inherit the Book —

**54** Guidance and a reminder for men of understanding.

**55** So be patient; surely the promise of Allâh is true; and ask protection for your sin<sup>a</sup> and celebrate the praise of your *Rabb* in the evening and the morning.

**51a.** The emphatic promise that the Prophet will be helped in this life, too, was made at a time when he was being persecuted, and there was not the least indication that his powerful opponents would be vanquished.

**55a.** The words *istaghfir-li-dhanbi-ka* occurring here, and repeated in 47:19, do not negative the claim made repeatedly that the Prophet was sinless. Fully five times the



Holy Prophet is described in the Arabic Glorious Qur'an as being one who purified others from sin, in 2:129, 151; 3:164; 9:103, and 62:2. How could a sinful man purify others from sins? In fact, we do not find any prophet or reformer so plainly described as a purifier of others as the Holy Prophet Muḥammad. Again, the Holy Prophet is repeatedly spoken of in the Arabic Glorious Qur'ân as walking in the way of perfect righteousness and entire submission to Allâh. Obedience to the Messenger is obedience to Allâh (4:80); if you love Allâh, then follow me, Allâh will love you (3:31). In the presence of these and a hundred other statements of a similar nature, sin could not be attributed to him. A perusal of the Holy Book further proves that the Qur'ân does not allow us to attribute sin to any prophet: "They speak not before He speaks, and according to His command they act" (21:27).

The significance of *dhanb* has already been fully explained in 3:11a. The other word occurring here is *istighfâr*. It is of the measure of *istif'âl*, and signifies the asking of *ghafr* or *maghfirah*. According to *Al-Mufradât fî Gharîb al-Qur'ân* (Dictionary of Qur'ân), by Shaikh Abu-l-Qâsim Al-Husain al-Râghib al-Isfahânî, *ghafr* means *the covering of a thing with that which will protect it from dirt*. Hence the words *ghufrân* and *maghfirah* on the part of Allâh signify, according to the same authority, *His granting protection to His servants against chastisement*. And *istaghfara* is explained as meaning *he sought of God covering or forgiveness or pardon* (*Tâj al-'Arûs* (Dictionary), by Imâm Muhibb al-Dîn Abu-l-Faid Murtaḍâ, and the *Arabic-English Lexicon* by Edward William Lane). It will thus be seen that the idea of protection is the dominant idea in the word *ghafr* and its derivatives, and the word not only signifies the *forgiveness of sin*, but also the *covering of sin*, which is really the *granting of protection against sin*. That *ghafr* means *protection against the punishment of sin* as well as *protection against the commission of sin*, is made clear by Qastalânî in his commentary of *Bukhârî: Al-ghafru al-sitru wa huwa immâ baina-l-'abdi wa-l-dhanbi wa immâ baina-l-dhanbi wa 'uqûbati-hî*, i.e., *ghafr* means *protection*, and it is either a *protection of the servant from sins* or a *protection from the punishment of sin*. It is therefore protection in the first sense that is meant here, protection from sins, a protection from the imperfections of human nature, which make a human being liable to sin unless he or she is protected by Allâh. In fact, wherever the word *ghafr* or *istighfâr* is used in connection with the righteous, as in 3:17, 7:151, 17:25, 40:7, etc., it is the protection from sin that is meant. See also 2:286a and 48:2a.

**56** Those who dispute about the messages of Allâh without any authority having come to them, there is naught in their breasts but (a desire) to become great, which they will never attain. So seek refuge in Allâh. Surely He is the Hearing, the Seeing.

**57** Assuredly the creation of the *samâwât* and the earth is greater than the creation of men; but most people know not.<sup>a</sup>

**58** And the blind and the seeing are not alike, nor those who believe and do good and the evildoers. Little do you mind!

**59** The Hour is surely coming — there is no doubt therein — but most people believe not.

**60** And your *Rabb* says: Pray to Me, I will answer you. Those who disdain My service will surely enter hell, abased.

#### SECTION 7: The Power of Allâh

**61** Allâh is He Who made for you the night for resting in and the day for seeing. Surely Allâh is Full of grace to humans, but most humans give not thanks.

**62** That is Allâh, your *Rabb*, the Creator of all things. There is no Deity but He. Whence are you then turned away?

**57a.** Humans is insignificant as compared with the vast creation of the *samâwât* and the earth, yet he deems himself so great that he would not bow his head before the great Creator of this vast creation.

**63** Thus are turned away those who deny the messages of Allâh.

**64** Allâh is He Who made the earth a resting-place for you and the *samâ'* a structure, and He formed you, then made goodly your forms, and He provided you with goodly things. That is Allâh, your *Rabb* — so blessed is Allâh, the *Rabb* of the worlds.

**65** He is the Living, there is no Deity but He; so call on Him, being sincere to Him in obedience. Praise be to Allah, the *Rabb* of the worlds!

**66** Say: I am forbidden to serve those whom you call upon besides Allâh, when clear arguments have come to me from my *Rabb*; and I am commanded to submit to the *Rabb* of the worlds.

**67** He it is Who created you from dust, then from a small life-germ, then from a clot, then He brings you forth as a child, then that you may attain your maturity, then that you may be old; and of you are some who die before and that you may reach an appointed term, and that you may understand.

**68** He it is Who gives life and causes death, so when He decrees an affair, He only says to it, Be, and it is.

## **SECTION 8: The End of Opposition**

**69** See you not those who dispute concerning the messages of Allâh? How are they turned away?—

**70** Those who reject the Book and that with which We have sent Our messengers. But they shall soon know.

**71** When the fetters are on their necks and the chains. They are dragged.

**72** Into hot water; then in the Fire they are burned.

**73** Then it is said to them: Where is that which you used to set up

**74** Besides Allâh? They will say: They have failed us; nay, we used not to call upon anything before. Thus does Allâh confound the disbelievers.

**75** That is because you exulted in the land unjustly and because you behaved insolently.

**76** Enter the gates of hell to abide therein; so evil is the abode of the proud.

**77** Therefore be patient, surely the promise of Allâh is true. But whether We make thee see part of what We threaten them with, or cause you to die, to Us shall they be returned.<sup>a</sup>

**78** And certainly We sent messengers before you — of them are those We have mentioned to you and of them are those We have not mentioned to you. Nor was it possible for a messenger to bring a sign except with Allâh's permission; so when Allâh's command comes, judgment is given with truth, and those who treat (it) as a lie are lost.

**77a.** The statement is made only to emphasize that they must suffer the evil consequences of their deeds, whether the Prophet lives to see their punishment or dies before they are punished.

**79** Allâh is He Who made the cattle for you that you may ride on some of them, and some of them you eat.

**80** And there are advantages in them for you, and that you may attain through them a need which is in your breasts,<sup>a</sup> and on them and on ships you are borne.

**81** And He shows you His signs; which then of Allâh's signs will you deny?

**82** Do they not travel in the land and see what the end of those before them was? They were more numerous than these and greater in strength and in fortifications in the land, but what they earned availed them not.

**83** Then when their messengers came to them with clear arguments, they exulted in what they had with them of knowledge and that at which they used to mock befell them.

**84** So when they saw Our punishment, they said: We believe in Allâh alone, and we deny what we used to associate with Him.

**85** But their faith could not profit them when they saw Our punishment. Such is Allâh's law, which ever takes its course in the matter of His servants; and there the disbelievers are lost.

**80a.** That is, they are of use to you in carrying your burdens and yourselves from one place to another.